

Acute Contaminants

Short-term exposure to acute contaminants, such as bacteria, protozoa, viruses, and nitrate, may result in immediate illness and, in some cases, death.

Administrative Order

Administrative orders are written documents, considered to be formal enforcement actions, which are issued by EPA or the States to address the noncompliance of a public water system, usually by means of a schedule with enforceable milestone dates.

Bilateral Compliance Agreements

Bilateral compliance agreements are written documents, considered to be formal enforcement actions signed by the water system and EPA or the State. They contain a compliance schedule with enforceable milestone dates.

Chronic Contaminants

Exposure to chronic contaminants, such as organic chemicals (volatile and synthetic), inorganic chemicals (e.g., metals, lead and copper) and radionuclides, may result in severe health effects that can recur frequently or develop slowly as a result of long-term exposure.

Coliform Bacteria

Microorganisms found in nature, in any decaying substance and also in the intestinal tract of humans and animals. Their presence in water can indicate a lapse in treatment and potential contamination by pathogens.

Community Water System

A community water system (CWS) is a public water system that serves at least 15 service connections used by year-round residents or regularly serves at least 25 year-round residents (e.g., homes, apartments and condominiums that are occupied year-round as primary residences).

Cryptosporidium

Cryptosporidium is a protozoa that causes the gastrointestinal disease cryptosporidiosis. The most serious, and sometimes deadly, consequences of cryptosporidiosis tend to be focused among members of the population with compromised immune systems.

Disinfection

Disinfection is a type of drinking water treatment, where microbiological contamination is

inactivated by using chlorine, chloramines, and chlorine dioxide or ozone.

Inorganic Chemicals

These are non-carbon based, mostly naturally-occurring compounds, such as metals, nitrates, and asbestos. EPA has established MCLs for 15 inorganic contaminants.

Lead and Copper Rule

Compliance with the Lead and Copper Rule indicates that a public water system has taken steps to minimize the risk of exposure to lead and copper from drinking water by monitoring for these contaminants and installing corrosion control where required.

Maximum Contaminant Level

A maximum contaminant level (MCL) is the maximum permissible level of a contaminant in water delivered to any user of a public water system.

Monitoring and Reporting

EPA established monitoring and reporting schedules, or contaminant-specific minimum testing schedules and operational reporting requirements, for public water systems.

Nitrate and Nitrite

Nitrate and nitrite are inorganic compounds that can enter water supplies from fertilizer runoff and sanitary wastewater discharges. Nitrates in drinking water are associated with methemoglobinemia, or blue baby syndrome, where nitrate reduces the blood's ability to carry oxygen.

Non-transient Non-community Water System

A non-transient non-community water system (NTNCWS) is a public water system that serves at least 25 of the same persons for over six months per year. A typical example of a non-transient non-community water system is a school or an office building that has its own water source, such as a drinking water well.

Notice of Violation

A notice of violation (NOV) is a written document, usually considered to be a formal enforcement action, issued by EPA or the States regarding a public water system's violations of applicable drinking water standards or schedule requirements. The notice of violation specifically describes the violations and seeks a return to compliance.

Pathogens

These are microorganisms (e.g., bacteria, viruses, or parasites) that can cause disease in humans and animals.

Public Water System

A public water system (PWS) is a system that provides piped water for human consumption and serves at least 25 persons or has at least 15 service connections. A public water system can be either a community water system, a non-transient non-community water system, or a transient non-community water system.

Radionuclides

Radioactive particles, such as radium-226, radium-228, gross alpha, and beta particle/photon radioactivity, can occur naturally in water or may result from human activity. EPA has established MCLs for beta/photon emitters, alpha emitters, and combined radium 226/228.

Regional Offices

Regional Offices are responsible for Environmental Protection Agency Regional programs within their respective jurisdictions. Regional Offices cooperate with Federal, State, interstate, and local agencies, as well as with industry, academic institutions, and other private groups to ensure that Regional needs are addressed and that Federal environmental laws are upheld.

Surface Water Treatment Rule

Compliance with the Surface Water Treatment Rule (SWTR) indicates that a public water system has taken steps to reduce exposure to microbiological contamination through filtration and disinfection or disinfection and watershed control.

Total Coliform Rule

The Total Coliform Rule establishes limits on coliform bacteria in water distribution systems. Although coliform bacteria usually are not pathogenic, they may indicate the presence of pathogens.

Transient Non-Community Water System

A transient non-community water system means a non-community water system that does not regularly serve at least 25 of the same persons over six months per year.

Treatment Technique

These are treatment methods required by EPA to minimize the level of a contaminant in drinking water. In cases where EPA has determined it is not technically or economically feasible to establish an MCL, EPA can instead specify a treatment technique.